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DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - Tour d'horizon with Minister Hurreh

Classified by Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

11. (C) Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Minister of Education Ismael Hurreh told the Ambassador October 3 that on or about October 12 the government of Prime Minister Gedi will be dissolved by Parliament. There is no leading candidate to replace Gedi. End Summary.

Replacement of Prime Minister

12. (C) Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Minister of Education Ismael Hurreh told the Ambassador October 3 that on or about October 12 the government of Prime Minister Gedi will be dissolved by Parliament. Hurreh said the President and Parliament are both adamant that Gedi be dismissed. There is no leading candidate to replace Gedi. MPs will play an active role in the selection process for a new PM. Hurreh claimed Bashir Raghe, who is from the same sub clan as Gedi (Hawiye/Harti/Warsengeli), told him it is time for Gedi to go. Hurreh claims that even MPs who have been taking money from Gedi are prepared to let him go. Hurreh believes Gedi's record is so poor that parliament will vote him out regardless of whatever inducements Gedi may devise.

Ethiopian Views

13. (C) Hurreh, who had just come from Addis Ababa, said Ethiopia was "jittery" on the issue of removing Gedi. According to Hurreh, the GOE is looking for direction from the USG. "It has to be right with America," he said. He claims his Ethiopian interlocutors said they "don't know" if removing Gedi will increase instability and delay further the transitional process, and that they have also told this to the USG. He opined that he hoped the Ethiopians won't "back out" of what otherwise is a broad consensus within Somalia to replace Gedi. The Ambassador remarked that our position is that the choice of prime minister is up to Yusuf, and the people of Somalia, and that any change should be in accordance with the Charter and contribute to stability.

Asmara Group

14. (C) Hurreh met recently with Mohamed Hassan Ali Daryeel, the former Secretary General of the Transitional Federal Parliament (effectively Chief of Staff to the Speaker), who he said was sent to

meet with him by former Speaker Sharif Hassan. Hurreh's purpose was to inform the former MPs now based in Asmara that Gedi will soon be removed as prime minister. Daryeel reportedly indicated that removal of Gedi would change the dynamics such that there may then be a basis for serious dialogue between the former MPs and the TFG. Hurreh was eager to promote this dialogue.

Rosy Scenario

15. (C) According to Hurreh, President Yusuf told him "it was time to move to the national level." Hurreh presented this statement as evidence that Yusuf wants to move beyond the narrow confines of traditional clan considerations (for example, that the PM must be a Hawiye/Abgal), and that the President now wants to move forward with the transition. Hurreh noted that October 12 marks the mid point in the five year transitional process. A new government can make a fresh start on rapid implementation of the transitional tasks.

16. (C) Hurreh said if Gedi is removed, the Parliament passes a law on political parties, and there is quick progress on a draft constitution, then the TFG will attract broad support and move the transition forward significantly. Hurreh expects Parliament to address a package of issues. (Comment: Presumably to include amending the Charter to allow non-MPs to serve as government ministers, a key recommendation of the National Reconciliation Congress. End Comment).

17. (C) Hurreh, who is still trying to position himself as a candidate for Prime Minister, conceded that if the Hawiye are to retain the portfolio, then the position must go to an Abgal. However, he was very dismissive of the prospect of Ali Mahdi as prime minister. Hurreh blamed the breakaway of Somaliland on Mahdi, and said there

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would be a very negative reaction from among the Haber Gedir. Appointment of Mahdi would also not be supported by intellectuals and the diaspora.

18. (C) Citing the appointment as Ambassador to Kuwait of a "youngster" with no experience, who is a nephew of the President's wife, Hurreh averred that Yusuf's appointments of late appear to be based solely on clan and family considerations. If appointed Prime Minister Hurreh believes that as a northerner he would be able to pull Somaliland back into the fold, and unify the clans. According to Hurreh, the desire for recognition of independence in Somaliland has faded. (Comment: Hurreh likely is alone with this view. End Comment). The Ambassador, noting the opportunity presented by a change in government, asked Hurreh to keep us informed should Yusuf appear to be headed to a misguided appointment.

Kismayo

19. (C) While he voiced respect for Yusuf's military background and abilities, Hurreh declared Yusuf is "politically wrong on Kismayo." The problem in Kismayo is a political one over the control of resources. Military solutions will not work. Rather, a solution is possible through dialogue and negotiation between the Marehan and Majerteen sub-clans of the Darod. Hurreh believes that the Prime Minister should have taken the lead on Kismayo. The lack of leadership from the Prime Minister to address the administrative concerns of the Marehan and Majerteen left the President to seek military solutions, which have not worked.

110. (C) Hurreh noted that "all the contenders for power in Kismayo are from clans in the minority in the region." Almost all of Somalia's clans are represented in the Juba regions, but no one clan is in the majority. Because of the clan makeup of the region Hurreh believes that lower and middle Juba could serve as a model for the country. Clan reconciliation in this part of the country could then serve to consolidate further reconciliation gains in the rest of the country. (Comment: Again, Hurreh was implicitly making the point that as Prime Minister he would set up an administrative structure

that would solve the Marehan/Majerteen power struggle in Kismayo and bring peace to region. End Comment).

Violent Opposition

¶11. (C) Hurreh claimed those involved in violent anti-government activities are not many, but are well-funded. Most are in Mogadishu, while some court remnants remain in lower Juba, and there is a "cell" in Puntland. Their logistics capacity is not much, according to Hurreh, and their movement and strength relies mainly on the weakness of the government. However, he claimed there has been an infusion of logistical support and cash, particularly after the Asmara conference. He said Hassan Dahir Aweys is being challenged by several factions, and Mukhtar Ibrahim Robow, former Deputy Chief of Security for the Islamic Courts, is "restive." He believes a new young leadership is trying to emerge from among the remnants of the former Islamic Courts.

Somaliland and Puntland

¶12. (C) Hurreh cautioned that the current standoff between Somaliland and Puntland over Las Anod is dangerous, and could erupt. He reviewed the history of the dispute as an intra-clan conflict among the Dhulbahante, going back to changing allegiances among sub-clan members with either the British or Italians. Containing the problem is very important, but Hurreh advised that an effective resolution will come by working through the Dhulbahante rather than either Somaliland or Puntland authorities. However, Hurreh reported that he spoke with authorities in Hargeysa about the situation, and he urged President Yusuf to promote a peaceful resolution. He did not name names, but added that "some very prominent and influential Dhulbahante people" who could be useful are in Washington.

Comment

¶13. (C) An engaging conversationalist (whose sociability is enhanced by his willingness to imbibe a cold beer) with access to certain insider information, we always keep in mind Hurreh's antipathy for Gedi and proclivity for self-promotion. Nonetheless, many of his observations jibe with much of the conventional wisdom on what is transpiring within the TFG and Somalia at the moment. End Comment.

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